# QUALITY<sup>SM</sup> RATED
## Program Manual

Lasting Effects for Georgia's Children, Families, and Economy

## Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov | 1-855-800-QRIS (7747)

Effective November 21, 2014 – Most current version is viewable online at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov

# Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction

**Thank you** for your commitment to Georgia's early care and education system. By participating in Quality Rated, Georgia's tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS), you are joining hundreds of providers who have accepted the challenge to enhance the quality of care you provide beyond minimum state licensing standards.

The *Quality Rated Program Manual* provides basic information about Quality Rated, guides you through each step, and provides information on how you can access support throughout the process.

This manual, the required Quality Rated Orientation, the Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales training, the Quality Rated Help Desk, the Quality Rated website, and the hands-on support offered by local child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R) will help ensure a positive experience for every program that participates in this important effort.

# 2. About Quality Rated

## 2.1 What is Quality Rated?

More and more children in the United States and in Georgia are cared for every day in out-of-home early care and education settings. A growing body of research supports the notion that the quality of care children receive in their child care settings dramatically affects their physical, mental, and academic development. Consequently, the emphasis on improving the quality of early care and education services has increased.

Quality Rated is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for other service related industries, Quality Rated assigns a quality rating to early care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in Quality Rated, early care and education programs embark on a path of continuous quality improvement.

Quality Rated is intended to improve the quality of early care and education programs through aligning and coordinating system-wide initiatives. This improvement will have lasting effects for Georgia's children, families, and economy.

**Quality Rated:**
- o Identifies indicators that *enhance* children's development and promote school readiness.
- o Increases *quality* of early care and education services.
- o Increases *families' understanding* and *demand* for higher quality early care and education.
- o Increases *professional development* opportunities, benchmarks, and rewards for a range of early care and education practitioners and providers.
- o Creates a *cross-sector framework* that can link standards, technical assistance, monitoring, finance, and consumer engagement for a range of programs: family day care homes, group day care homes, child care centers, school-based programs, Head Start programs, and others.

**Quality Rated is made up of five components:**
1. *Standards* that are understandable, measurable, and can be verified lead to a 0, 1, 2, or 3 star rating that informs families and the public about the level of quality a program provides.
2. *Accountability* and transparent monitoring to determine how well programs meet the quality standards, validate the assignment of ratings, and verify ongoing compliance with quality standards.
3. *Support* for programs and professionals to encourage participation and improve quality. Supports include the professional development system, training, technical assistance, mini-grant opportunities, and mentoring.
4. *Financial Incentives* to help programs improve learning environments, attain higher ratings, and sustain long-term quality. All Quality Rated levels are supported by bonus packages that include training, materials, and equipment or financial bonuses. Information regarding the bonus packages is located on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.
5. *Consumer Education* to inform families and the public about the importance of quality in early and school-age care and education. Easy and widespread access to information about ratings is important to families, businesses, and the public.

## 2.2 History

The movement to improve and designate levels of quality began in the 1990s when some states began rewarding programs that had achieved national accreditation with higher subsidy reimbursement rates through child care subsidy programs (like Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services program). These states found, however, that few providers were able to achieve accreditation due to the differences between licensing standards and accreditation standards. Many states realized that providers needed help to move toward quality in a focused, gradual, and step-by-step approach.

In Georgia, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) initiated the idea of developing a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS). Following is an outline of the evolution of today's Quality Rated program.

- o From 2000-2004, the Georgia Early Learning Initiative (GELI)/Smart Start Georgia explored and piloted quality initiatives that included training, a substitute teacher program, technical assistance, and increased subsidized child care rates (through CAPS) in select Georgia counties.
- o In 2004, Governor Sonny Perdue and the Georgia General Assembly created Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning to further streamline the state's services to Georgia's children from birth to age five and their families. The department was formed by merging the Office of School Readiness with units from the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Child Care Council.
- o In 2004, Georgia Professional Standards Commission approved the Birth through Five Teacher Certification which recognized the importance of qualified early childhood educators.
- o In 2006, DECAL gathered diverse stakeholder groups to discuss and design a systemic approach to enhance the quality of Georgia's early care and education system.
- o Between September 2006 and April 2007, the Quality Systems Indicators (QSI) Committee developed Georgia's standards and indicators of quality.
- o In 2007, the Georgia State Senate convened a committee to report on the quality of child care in Georgia.
- o In June 2007, the QSI committee recommended refinements to the standards and indicators and then identified measurement tools.
- o In September 2007, national experts reviewed the standards and indicators from a systemic approach.
- o Between October 2007 and March 2008, the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina (UNC) – Chapel Hill studied the feasibility of using the standards and indicators to "rate" child care programs. The FPG feasibility study revealed a need to determine the overall quality of Georgia's family day care programs, child care learning centers, and Georgia's Pre-K programs.
- o In 2008, Georgia State University and the University of Georgia completed an Economic Impact Study revealing the impact of the early child care and education industry on Georgia's economy.
- o Between September 2008 and December 2010, FPG studied the quality of care provided in Georgia's family day programs, child care learning centers, and Georgia's Pre-K programs. The studies confirmed the need for a TQRIS in Georgia.

- In 2010, a team of DECAL staff designed a graphic representation of Georgia's Quality Rated and Georgia's process called Georgia Steps Up to Quality.
- In October 2011, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal announced the launch of Georgia's TQRIS program called Quality Rated. Quality Rated was developed through a collaborative process involving representatives from other state agencies, for-profit and nonprofit child care providers, family day care providers, the philanthropic community, early childhood advocacy groups, school-age care advocacy groups, professional organizations, child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), and higher education.
- In January 2012, Quality Rated was launched statewide.
- In July 2013, tiered reimbursement for CAPS was instituted for rated programs, and program ratings were made public.

## 2.3 Benefits

Research has found positive associations between early care and education program quality and child outcomes that promote school readiness (Vandell, 2004). The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes (CQO) study examined children's outcomes over time in elementary school in light of their participation in quality early care and education programs (Peisner-Feinberg and Burchinal, 1997, 1999, 2001). In this study, young children who attended higher quality early care and education programs had better language development, problem solving, and social skills. Most importantly, the positive effects of a quality early care and education experience continued through kindergarten into the second grade. Ongoing research supports that higher program quality is associated with better outcomes for children. The goal of Quality Rated is to increase the number of and access to high-quality early education and school-age care programs for Georgia's children.

# 3. Navigating Quality Rated

## 3.1 Getting Started – Quality Rated Eligibility and Licensed/Registered Programs

**Eligibility to Participate**

The following entities are eligible to participate in Quality Rated:

- o Child care programs and family day care providers enrolling three or more children under the age of thirteen years licensed or registered by DECAL
- o Military child care programs licensed by the Department of Defense
- o Georgia's Pre-K programs operated by local boards of education
- o Early Head Start and Head Start programs
- o University and technical college lab schools
- o Early learning and development programs funded by Part B or C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

**Rating Requirements**

To receive a Quality Rated star rating, participants must complete an approved portfolio and Environment Rating Scale and be compliant with the following programs (if applicable):

- o Compliant with Child Care Services (CCS) licensing/registration rules
- o Compliant with Georgia's Pre-K Program
- o Compliant with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Services Program (SFSP)
- o Compliant with the Childcare and Parent Services Program (CAPS)

Support is available to help providers who are non-compliant to become compliant by providing core rules training and technical assistance through DECAL's Child Care Services division.  If you have questions about licensing compliance for Quality Rated, contact your Child Care Services consultant at 404-657-5562.

**Help Desk**

If you have questions regarding eligibility for Quality Rated, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or email qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

## 3.2 Quality Rated Participation and Rating Process

| Create an online Quality Rated account | Eligibility and Application Participation | Orientation and Introduction to ERS | Technical Assistance and Professional Development Incentives | Portfolio Submission and Environment Rating Scales Observation | Program Rated | Annual Verification |

### Application

Programs must complete the Quality Rated application online at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov. Only a Program Director or designee can begin the application process. After the application is submitted, programs will be notified of their acceptance into the program. Programs can access Quality Rated materials, documentation, and information through their online account. Submission of the program's documentation and evidence for verification will also be completed online through the program's Quality Rated portfolio.

### Orientation

At least one administrator from programs participating in Quality Rated must attend and complete a Quality Rated Orientation and Introduction to Environment Rating Scales (ERS).These training sessions are offered regularly by each CCR&R. A list of CCR&Rs is included in this manual (Section 4.1).

### Technical Assistance (TA)

Once the application is approved, programs may choose to join the Quality Rated technical assistance track, or they may start the Quality Rated process on their own.  If the program chooses to take the technical assistance track, free individualized technical assistance is provided by a specialist from the local CCR&R. Technical assistance from a CCR&R may include a self-assessment conducted with the TA consultant to help the program document their strengths and make plans for ongoing program improvement.  A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed to ensure that the participating programs are aware of and agree to their role and responsibilities.

### Structural Quality Assessment: Online Portfolio

Programs earn points toward a star rating by submitting evidence aligned to five standards, displaying that they have gone above and beyond minimum licensing requirements. The portfolio does not have to be completed in order. The five standards (detailed in Section 5) are:

*Standard 1 – Director and Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development Registry Verification*
This standard focuses on the need for programs to recruit and retain highly qualified and support the continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills. The Georgia Early Childhood Education Professional Development Registry's (PDR) Training History is used to measure personnel qualifications and ongoing professional development. More information and instructions about the PDR is at www.pdr.decal.ga.gov.  This requires action on the part of instructional staff (lead teachers, assistant teachers, floaters) and administrative staff (directors, assistant directors) to register and submit their information to the PDR, as well as participate in individualized professional development activities. For Quality Rated scoring purposes, teachers must have a career level designated by the PDR. Staff members who are registered in the PDR but have not received a career level are not included in scoring.

*Standard 2 – Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity*
This standard asks program staff to reflect on their current health, safety, and nutrition standards and identify areas that can be improved. It also addresses the need for programs to partner with families to provide ongoing developmental screenings of children and refer them to community resources that can help resolve any issues that might impede a child's readiness for school.

*Standard 3 – Family Engagement*
This standard supports providers in partnering with families to improve child outcomes. Georgia uses the Strengthening Families Framework to build a strong foundation of family partnerships and community connections.  Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy, better peer interactions, fewer behavior problems, and more motivation and persistence. Providers play a crucial role in strengthening families' connections to the community and to early learning settings.

*Standard 4 – Intentional Teaching Practices*
This standard is focused on the intentional teaching practices of providers as they align curriculum with Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), lesson planning, and assessment. It is critical that programs show intention and responsiveness to the holistic developmental needs of children at each age level. Planning and practice must support the five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) with respect to each child's home language, traditions, and culture.

*Standard 5 – Teacher: Student Ratio Requirements*
This standard supports research that indicates that smaller numbers of children per adult are associated with more positive outcomes and that crowded environments may interfere with learning. Programs are encouraged to consider managing group size and ratios as a key component of providing quality care for children.

Once programs have submitted an application and have reviewed the *Quality Rated Program Manual* and Rating Rubric, documentation for each standard should be compiled to complete the online portfolio. Courtesy emails will be sent every 30 days if updates are not made to the portfolio.

Documentation for Standard 5 (Teacher: Student Ratio Requirements) must be within 30 calendar days of the portfolio submission date, therefore should be completed toward the end of the process.

**REMEMBER: Keep a copy of all evidence that your program has compiled, uploaded, and submitted. Save your portfolio evidence and the online portfolio to a secure location on your computer.**

Once the portfolio is submitted, programs will receive an email confirming that DECAL has received the portfolio. A portfolio review will be completed within ninety (90) calendar days after the program has received an email that the portfolio has been accepted.

If you have questions while gathering portfolio data, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decal.ga.gov, or your local CCR&R.

### Environment Rating Scales Observation

Once the program has been notified that its portfolio has been accepted, an unannounced Environment Rating Scales (ERS) observation will be conducted within ninety (90) calendar days. A Quality Rated Assessor(s) from DECAL will conduct the appropriate observation(s) of the program. The ERS tools used for the observation will be based on the type of site and the age groups served. For programs with more than one classroom, one-third of each type of classroom will be randomly selected to be observed. For example, if a center has three infant-toddler classrooms and six preschool classrooms, one ITERS room and two ECERS rooms will be observed.  A complete description of the Environment Rating Scales process is included in Section 6. The ERS instruments used in the observation phase of the Quality Rated process are:

> Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R)
> Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)
> Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R)
> School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale – (SACERS) (pilot phase only)

Note: The Parent and Staff Subscales of the Environment Rating Scales and certain items of the School-Age Environment Rating Scale are not evaluated as part of the Quality Rated evaluation process.

At the end of the observation, the Assessor(s) will leave the facility to prepare the report.  The Assessor(s) will not share results of the observation with the program because the report scores must be combined with the portfolio to determine the star rating.  Within a few days following the assessment, the provider will receive an email with a link to a survey in which they are asked to evaluate the experience of the observation process.  The purpose of the survey, which is voluntary on the part of the provider, is to identify ways DECAL can improve the observation process and does not impact the individual program's status in Quality Rated. The feedback is combined in a cumulative group summary to determine the effectiveness of the observation process.

Any program that scores below a 3.0 in any classroom on the ERS will receive a "no stars" rating.

To reiterate, programs will be assessed within ninety (90) calendar days from the day the program receives notification that their portfolio has been *accepted*.

### Notification of Star Rating

The final step of the Quality Rated process is the notification of the program's 0, 1, 2, or 3 star rating. The program's rating is determined by a point system. Points are assigned based on data collected through the portfolio and the program's average ERS score. Bonus points are awarded for certain national accreditations including, but not limited to: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Accreditation, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation, and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation. A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points for national accreditations. The tabulated points will then equate to a star rating. Programs will be notified of the star rating by email within sixty (60) calendar days of their ERS observation and can review their Quality Rated online account for details. For more information regarding how Quality Rated points are earned, see the Rating Rubric in Section 5.

### Appeal Process

If you believe that the process for determining the program's star rating was compromised in a way that adversely affected the designation of quality, you have the right to file a written statement detailing your concerns with DECAL that will initiate the appeals process. An appeal letter outlining specific concerns must be submitted to qualityrated@decal.ga.gov within 10 business days of being notified of the Quality Rated star rating. Ordering a bonus package signifies the acceptance of your program's star rating. If a bonus package is ordered before an appeal is filed or during the appeals process, the appeal will be nullified and will not be processed.

### Use of the Quality Rated Logo

Only programs that have a star rating can use the Quality Rated logos and symbols. Once your program has been rated, we encourage you to use the Quality Rated logo to symbolize your commitment to young children and to going above and beyond minimum licensing standards. You can use this logo to promote your program through signs, web pages, social media, letterhead, advertising, and other materials.

We urge all Quality Rated programs to use the Quality Rated logo and related messages to create a consistent presentation by programs in communities around Georgia. This consistent message will help families and other stakeholders identify programs that have earned the mark of quality in Georgia and gain a better understanding of why Quality Rated programs are the right choice for children.

When using our logo, you are required to follow the following guidelines:
- o The logo should be printed in black-and-white or its original colors.
- o The logo and type should never be rearranged.

When promoting your Quality Rated status, consider using these messages:
- o Our program is Quality Rated through Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.
- o Our program is proud to have earned the Quality Rated mark of quality for early childhood education programs in Georgia.
- o Quality Rated indicates that our program goes above and beyond minimum licensing standards to support young children.

It is not acceptable for providers who do not have a star rating to use messages that imply that they are Quality Rated. For example, programs not Quality Rated should not use statements such as:

o   Our program complies with Quality Rated guidelines.

It is acceptable for a program that is participating, but has not yet received a star rating, to inform families of children currently enrolled in your program that the program is working towards a Quality Rated designation.

The unauthorized use of the logo and promotional materials is illegal and punishable under Georgia law. To file a complaint about a program that is falsely advertising Quality Rated, contact the Quality Rated Help Desk at 1-855-800-7747 or qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

Once rated, you can purchase a variety of products with the Quality Rated logo and your program's information online at www.QualityRatedStore.com.

### Change of Program Ownership

A program's Quality Rating is non-transferable. When a center is sold prior to or after receiving a star rating, change of ownership requirements must be met as determined by DECAL. DECAL will request specific documents to help determine if the program can maintain its rating under the new owner. Rating decisions are at the discretion of DECAL.

If the change is approved, the Quality Rated star level is maintained. It is understood that the new owner accepts the responsibility of maintaining program quality. If a program is not in good standing when a change is requested by the new owner, it will not be approved.

Entities applying for a change of ownership will not be considered if documentation exists that indicates non-compliance with any other DECAL program or state agency. Entities requesting a change of ownership should not base business decisions on an assumption that DECAL will automatically approve the continuation of the Quality Rating if there has been a change in ownership.

### Maintenance of the Star Rating

Star ratings are awarded for a three-year period.  All programs that receive a star rating have the option of maintaining their star rating by completing an annual online verification. Providers will receive email reminders regarding annual verification starting 120 days from the anniversary of the program's star rating. These changes will go into effect online on November 17th.

The annual verification allows providers to choose from three options:

*Option 1 – Check-In*
The Check-In option is designed for providers that wish to maintain their Quality Rating.  Providers will complete and submit only a Check-In Application. A portfolio is not required. A step-by-step guide for completing the Check-In process is available on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.

*Option 2 – Renewal Incentive/Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Award*
The CQI award application process is designed for a program that chooses to maintain its current star rating and opt to wait until the 3rd year anniversary of the program's Quality Rated star rating to have the mandatory Environment Rating Scale observation. 1, 2, and 3 star programs are eligible for this option.

A CQI award supports program improvement in Standard 1, Director and Teacher Qualifications, Standard 2, Child Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Standard 3, Family Engagement, or a project that will support quality improvement based on the program's ERS report.  Child care facilities are eligible for a $1,000 award, and group day care and family day care homes are eligible for a $500 award.

No scoring is associated with the CQI application, and the program will maintain its current star rating for an additional year.  A detailed step-by-step guide for completing Standards 1, 2 and 3, and the CQI Award Application is available on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov. The documentation for this award will be uploaded online to the CQI Portfolio.

*Option 3 – Request for Reassessment*
Request for Reassessment option is designed for a program that requests an observation before the 3rd year anniversary of the program's Quality Rated star rating. An email will be sent to the provider within 120 days of the program's anniversary with a reminder that Option 3 requires that a new portfolio must be submitted before the anniversary date of the program's star rating.

The new portfolio score combined with the new ERS scores will determine whether a program's star rating is maintained, increases or decreases.  The rating from the reassessment will remain for three years. Programs are eligible for a new bonus package only if the rating from the reassessment increases. Only 0, 1, and 2 star programs are eligible for a reassessment. A detailed step-by-step guide for completing the Request for Reassessment is available on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.

Note: If a program does not complete any of the options described above, then the program's annual verification will automatically revert to Option 1, making them ineligible for a CQI award or a reassessment.


### Participation in DECAL Research Activities
Once a program has started an application to become Quality Rated, the program agrees and acknowledges that they may be contacted to participate in research surrounding Quality Rated. While participation in this research is not required, the program's participation will help improve Quality Rated. The program's participation and data collected is deidentified from the program and kept confidential to the extent allowable by Georgia law.

# 4. Resources and Support Services

## 4.1 Training

### Quality Rated Orientation

Directors or owners of licensed child care centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes participating in Quality Rated must complete the Quality Rated Orientation and Introduction to ERS training. These state-approved classes are offered by local CCR&Rs free of charge. The initial orientation provides critical information and support as programs work to improve quality.  Schedules and registration for both trainings are available online at www.cnp2000.DECAL.ga.gov/QualityRatedTraining/Splash.asp. The program's license number is the username and the temporary password is QualityRated (one word with a capitalized Q and R). After the initial login, the password must be changed to a familiar password using numbers and upper and lower case letters.  Easy to follow instructions are provided on the training sign-in page when accessing the website to set up an individual account for the program.

### Support Training

State-approved training for Quality Rated is provided free of charge through DECAL and local CCR&Rs. To register, contact your local CCR&R or visit www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.

### Technical Assistance

*Help Desk*

Quality Rated support is available to programs through the Quality Rated Help Desk. The toll-free Quality Rated Help Desk is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  Programs can call 1-855-800-QRIS (7747) to receive Quality Rated assistance.  In addition, communication is available via email at qualityrated@decal.ga.gov.

*On-Site Technical Assistance*

DECAL funds the work of the CCR&Rs in Georgia. The CCR&Rs help DECAL fulfill its vision and mission through an invaluable network of support for families and early care and education professionals at the local level.  CCR&R agencies offer free, targeted technical assistance to eligible programs participating in Quality Rated. In addition to training on topics such as Environment Rating Scales, Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), Family Engagement, Inclusion, and Cultural Competency, CCR&Rs provide individualized technical assistance that supports programs through the Quality Rated process and prepares them for the pending ERS observations.

Technical assistance can be requested on the initial Quality Rated application by clicking "Request Technical Assistance" on the provider's homepage or by emailing a request to qualityrated@decal.ga.gov. The technical assistance provider will work with each program to determine the type and level of support based on program needs. The CCR&R will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the participating program that outlines the services, roles, and responsibilities of both parties. Quality Rated technical assistance is voluntary; however, a CCR&R may choose to discontinue technical assistance services if a program demonstrates consistent inability to comply with the guidelines set forth in the MOU.

The following pages identify the CCR&R regions and contact information for each. Contact the CCR&R in your region for additional information about upcoming orientation classes, training, technical assistance opportunities, and other services.

## Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Regions in Georgia



**CCR&R Region**

- Region 1 - North Georgia
- Region 2 - Metro Atlanta
- Region 3 - Central Georgia
- Region 4 - Southwest Georgia
- Region 5 - Southeast Georgia
- Region 6 - East Georgia

| REGION | CONTACT INFORMATION | COUNTIES SERVED |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of North Georgia-Quality Care for Children, Inc.**<br>**Director: Gloria Calhoun**<br>913 N. Tennessee Street, Suite 202<br>Cartersville, GA 30120<br>**Toll Free**: 1-800-308-1825, Local: (770) 387-0828<br>Fax (678) 721-6676<br>gloria.calhoun@qualitycareforchildren.org<br>www.qualitycareforchildren.org | Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Dade, Dawson, Douglas, Fannin, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Haralson, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Towns, Union, Walker, White, Whitfield |
| 2 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of Metro Atlanta-Quality Care for Children, Inc.**<br>**Executive Director: Pam Runkle**<br>2751 Buford Hwy NE #500<br>Atlanta, GA 30324<br>**Toll Free:** 1-877-722-2445, Local: (404) 479-4200<br>Fax (404) 479-4166<br>pam.runkle@qualitycareforchildren.org<br>www.qualitycareforchildren.org | DeKalb and Fulton |
| 3 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of Central Georgia-Georgia Regents University**<br>**Director: Julie Phillips**<br>277 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Suite 104<br>Macon, GA 31201<br>**Toll Free:** 1-877-228-3566, Local: (478) 751-3000<br>Fax (478) 751-3010<br>jphillips@gru.edu<br>www.gru.edu/ccrr | Baldwin, Bibb, Butts, Clayton, Coweta, Fayette, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, McDuffie, Monroe, Newton, Pike, Putnam, Rockdale, Spalding, Taliaferro, Twiggs, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson |
| 4 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of Southwest Georgia at Albany-Darton College**<br>**Director: Soraya Kimbrel-Miller**<br>2429 Gillionville Rd.<br>Albany, GA 31701<br>**Toll Free:** 1-866-833-3552, Local: (229) 317-6834<br>Fax (229) 317-6968<br>soraya.kimbrel@darton.edu<br>www.ccrr.darton.edu | Atkinson, Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bleckley, Brooks, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crawford, Crisp, Decatur, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Harris, Houston, Irwin, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, Meriwether, Miller, Mitchell, Muscogee, Peach, Pulaski, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Troup, Turner, Upson, Webster, Wilcox, Worth |
| 5 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of Southeast Georgia at Savannah-Savannah Technical College**<br>**Director: Sherry Costa**<br>190 Crossroads Parkway<br>Savannah, GA 31407<br>**Toll Free:** 1-877-935-7575, Local: (912) 443-3011<br>Fax (912) 966-6735<br>scosta@savannahtech.edu<br>www.ccrrofsoutheastga.org | Appling, Bacon, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Burke, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Columbia, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Jenkins, Johnson, Laurens, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Pierce, Richmond, Screven, Tattnall, Toombs, Treutlen, Ware, Wayne, Wheeler |
| 6 | **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of East Georgia-Quality Care for Children, Inc.**<br>**Director: Victoria Hawkins**<br>3706 Atlanta Hwy, Suite 1<br>Athens, GA 30606<br>(706) 543-6177<br>Fax (706) 543-3077<br>Vicki.Hawkins@qualitycareforchildren.org<br>www.qualitycareforchildren.org | Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Gwinnett, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Stephens, Walton, Wilkes |

QUALITY RATED

## 4.2 Additional Support Programs and Services

**SCHOLARSHIPS, INCENTIVES, and AWARDS**

DECAL administers three educational assistance programs (SCHOLARSHIPS, INCENTIVES, and AWARDS) for Georgia's early care and education professionals. For more information about these programs and to find out how to qualify, call 1-800-227-3410 or visit www.decalscholars.com.

**Quality Rated Incentives**

Financial incentives to help programs improve learning environments, attain higher ratings, and sustain long-term quality are a key component of Quality Rated. However, all bonus packages, grants, and other rewards for participation or achievement of rated status are available through federal funding and from private foundations and are contingent on the availability of funds and subject to change without prior notice.

**Bonus Packages**

Bonus packages are designed to assist programs in continuous quality improvement efforts. Once rated, programs are eligible to select bonus packages based on their star rating. Bonus packages for 1 and 2 star rated programs are intended to support the program's movement to a higher rating. Bonus packages for 3 star programs are intended to maintain the 3 star rating and to support ongoing quality improvement. Information on specific bonus packages is located on the Quality Rated website. All bonus packages are privately funded, therefore they are contingent upon the availability of funds and are subject to change without notice.

# 5. Program Portfolio Standards and Criteria

The Quality Rated portfolio helps organize evidence of a program's commitment to quality by electronic submission. The portfolio is composed of five sections:

- o Standard 1 – Director and Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development Registry (PDR) Verification
- o Standard 2 – Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
- o Standard 3 – Family Engagement
- o Standard 4 – Intentional Teaching Practices
- o Standard 5 – Teacher: Student Ratios

Before gathering portfolio data, programs are encouraged to closely review the information regarding each standard in this section. Contact the Quality Rated Help Desk or your local CCR&R with any questions.

The rubric for programs who have created an online Quality Rated portfolio on or after September 25, 2014 is located in pages 18 – 31. The rubric for programs who have created an online Quality Rated portfolio before September 25, 2014 is located on pages 32 – 46.

## 5.1 Rating Rubric for Portfolios Created on and after September 25, 2014
## Points for Child Care Centers, Family, and Group Day Care Homes with One or More Additional Staff Members

| Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care* | | | |
| Standards | Total Score Achieved for Each Standard | Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion | |
| | | Portfolio Score | Structural Quality Points |
| 1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B) | | 0-14 | 0 |
| 2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity | | 15-44 | 5 |
| 3. Family Engagement | | 45-74 | 10 |
| 4. Intentional Teaching Practices | | 75-104 | 15 |
| 5. Teacher: Student Ratios | | | |
| Total Standards (Portfolio) Score | | | |

| Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)* | |
|---|---|
| *Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured* | |
| ERS Score Range <br> *Note: This is the program ERS average score* | Process Quality Points for ERS Score |
| 0.0 – 2.99 | 0 |
| 3.0 – 3.99 | 10 |
| 4.0 – 4.99 | 20 |
| 5.0 – 7.00 | 30 |

*If any classrooms score below a 3.0 on the ERS, the program will receive a "no stars" rating.

| Accreditation Bonus Points** | |
|---|---|
| Accreditation | Points for Each Accreditation |
| NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA | 2 |
| NECPA, SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International | 1 |

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

| TQRIS Components | Points Awarded |
|---|---|
| Structural Quality | |
| Process Quality | |
| Bonus Points | |
| Total Points | |

| Total Points | Star Level |
|---|---|
| 0-14 | No Stars |
| 15-24 | ★ |
| 25-35 | ★★ |
| 36-45 | ★★★ |

## Points for Family Day Care Providers with No Additional Staff Members

| Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care* | | | |
| Standards | Total Score Achieved for Each Standard | Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion | |
| | | Portfolio Score | Structural Quality Points |
| 1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Part A only) | | 0-14 | 0 |
| 2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity | | 15-38 | 5 |
| 3. Family Engagement | | 39-62 | 10 |
| 4. Intentional Teaching Practices | | 63-86 | 15 |
| 5. Teacher: Student Ratios | | | |
| Total Standards (Portfolio) Score | | | |

| Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)* | |
|---|---|
| *Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured* | |
| ERS Score Range | Process Quality Points for ERS Score |
| 0.0 – 2.99 | 0 |
| 3.0 – 3.99 | 10 |
| 4.0 – 4.99 | 20 |
| 5.0 – 7.00 | 30 |

*If a classroom scores below a 3.0 on the ERS, the program will receive a "no stars" rating.

| Accreditation Bonus Points** | |
|---|---|
| Accreditation | Points for Each Accreditation |
| NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA | 2 |
| NECPA, SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International | 1 |

**A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

| TQRIS Components | Points Awarded |
|---|---|
| Structural Quality | |
| Process Quality | |
| Bonus Points | |
| Total Points | |

| Total Points | Star Level |
|---|---|
| 0-14 | No Stars |
| 15-24 | ★ |
| 25-35 | ★★ |
| 36-45 | ★★★ |

## Portfolio Standard 1: Director(s) and Teacher Qualifications as Verified in the Georgia Professional Development Registry

Points awarded in meeting Standard I require all administrators, including Co-Directors (if any), and instructional staff to register their education and training in the Professional Development Registry. In the registry, education and training are verified, and registrants are assigned a "Career Level." Verification may take up to 90 days. Quality Rated points are based on the education and professional development criteria listed below as verified in the PDR. For more information regarding the PDR, go to www.pdr.DECAL.ga.gov or call 1-866-258-7737. Family day care providers with no additional staff only complete Part A of Standard 1.  For Quality Rated scoring purposes, teachers must have a career level designated by the PDR. Staff members who are registered in the PDR but have not received a career level are not included in scoring.

### Standard 1, Part A: Director(s)/Program Administrator Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible

*Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.*

| 1.1 Center Director(s) or Family Provider Education Level | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.1.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.1.1 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher in the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry **and** has completed a state approved 40-hour Director Course **and** has 5 years of experience as a program director or family day care provider. | 2 |
| 1.1.2 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 7** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development Registry. The director(s)/family care provider may also earn these points if he/she holds an associate degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least six semester hours in early childhood education or a related field. (Any academic coursework that will be evaluated to meet the semester hour requirement must be entered into the PDR under ECE-Related coursework.) | 4 |
| 1.1.3 The director(s)/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 8** or higher in the Georgia Professional Development Registry. The director(s)/family care provider may also earn these points if he/she holds a bachelor's degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree and has earned at least nine semester hours in early childhood education or a related field. (Any academic coursework that will be evaluated to meet the semester hour requirement must be entered into the PDR under ECE-Related coursework.) | 6 |
| What to Submit for Standard 1.1 | |
| Initial Application and Reassessment:<br>    o   No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

| 1.2 Center Director(s) or Family Provider Professional Learning Plan (PLP) | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.2.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.2.1 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes administrative training in at least **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing a minimum of **two** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 2 |
| 1.2.2 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** and **one Administrative (ADM) Competency** area with a goal of completing **four** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 4 |
| 1.2.3 The director(s)/family provider has a written Professional Learning Plan that includes training in at least **one ECE Competency** and **two different Administrative (ADM) Competency** areas with a goal of completing **six** hours of training in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 6 |
| What to Submit for Standard 1.2<br><br>Initial Application:<br>   o   Copy of a Professional Learning Plan<br><br>Reassessment:<br>   o   Documentation of completing the previous year's PLP training (verified through the PDR)<br>   o   New PLP | |

| 1.3 Points for Center Director(s) or Family Provider Annual Training | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.3.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.3.1 The director(s)/family provider has completed **14** hours of DECAL approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (4 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 2 |
| 1.3.2 The director(s)/family provider has completed **16** hours of DECAL approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (6 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 4 |
| 1.3.3 The director(s)/family provider has completed **18** hours of DECAL approved **training during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (8 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 6 |
| What to Submit for Standard 1.3<br>Initial Assessment and Reassessment:<br>   o   No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

## Standard 1, Part B: Teacher Education and Professional Development – 18 Points Possible (36 Total Points Possible for Parts A and B of Standard 1)

*Read all descriptors and award points based on the highest level of criteria met for each section.*
*Family Day Care Providers with no additional staff do not complete this section.*

| 1.4 Teacher Education | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.4.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.4.1 At least **50% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 3** or higher. | 2 |
| 1.4.2 At least **50% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 4** or higher. | 4 |
| 1.4.3 At least **75% of all lead teachers** and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 5** or higher. | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 1.4</div><br>Initial Application and Reassessment:<br>    o   No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Information for scoring career levels will be pulled from the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

| 1.5 Teacher Professional Learning Plan (PLP) | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.5.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.5.1 At least **Eighty percent (80%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **one ECE Competency** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 2 |
| 1.5.2 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.1, **and** at least **Seventy-five percent (75%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training in **two** different **ECE Competencies** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 4 |
| 1.5.3 Has completed all of criteria 1.5.2, **and** at least **Fifty percent (50%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual Professional Learning Plan that includes training **three** different **ECE Competencies** in one or more of the following areas: inclusion, cultural responsiveness, supporting dual language learners, and/or implementation of the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS). | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 1.5</div><br>Initial Application:<br>    o   Copy of each staff member's individual PLP with competency codes and training levels noted<br>Reassessment:<br>    o   Completion of the previous year's PLP training (verified through the PDR)<br>    o   New PLP for each staff member for the current year | |

| 1.6 Teacher Annual Training | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 1.6.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 1.6.1 **Twenty-five percent (25%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **14** hours of DECAL approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (4 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 2 |
| 1.6.2 **Fifty percent (50%) of all lead and assistan**t teachers have completed **16** hours of DECAL approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (6 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 4 |
| 1.6.3 **Seventy-five percent (75%) of all lead and assistant teachers** have completed **18** hours of DECAL approved training **during the past 12 months prior to portfolio acceptance** (8 hours beyond minimum licensing rules). | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 1.6</div><br>Initial Application and Reassessment:<br>    o    No documentation needs to be uploaded in this section. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

Note: Program employees who have not met the minimum educational requirement for Child Care Licensing should be enrolled in a program of study leading to the award of a credential or degree in early childhood education.

## Portfolio Standard 2: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity – 18 Points Possible

For this standard, program staff will reflect on their program's current health, safety, and nutrition standards and identify areas that can be improved. Points are assigned based on the completion of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment, a written improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

| 2.1 Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 2.1.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 2.1.1 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **1 criterion** for **each of the two domains** (nutrition and physical activity). | 2 |
| 2.1.2 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **2 criteria** for **each of the two domains**. | 4 |
| 2.1.3 The program has conducted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **3 criteria** for **each of the two domains**. | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 2.1</div><br>Initial Application:<br>    o  Completed the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment<br>    o  Completed improvement plan with evidence of addressing 1, 2, or 3 criteria for each of the two domains (nutrition and physical activity)<br><br>Reassessment:<br>    o  Documentation of implementing the previous year's improvement plan and of creating a new improvement plan | |

| 2.2  First Aid/CPR Certification | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 2.2.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 2.2.1 **60%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification. | 2 |
| 2.2.2 **70%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification. | 4 |
| 2.2.3 **80%** of staff have a current First Aid/CPR certification. | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 2.2</div><br>Initial Application and Reassessment:<br>    o  First Aid/CPR certifications are entered into the PDR and are posted on the "Other Career Data" tab. Points will be awarded based on the information in the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

| 2.3 Written Health Information/Family Resources | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 2.3.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 2.3.1 In the past year, the program has provided culturally responsive written materials to families about the importance of **immunizations, oral hygiene, and vision and hearing screenings**. | 2 |
| 2.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.1, **and** has established a policy to encourage families to submit vision, hearing, nutrition, and dental screenings for all four-year-old children within 90 days of enrollment.  (Sample forms and handouts are located on the Quality Rated website under "Additional Resources." If used, they must be adapted and individualized to your program prior to submission.) | 4 |
| 2.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 2.3.2, **and** developmental screening tools are used annually, with family permission, to provide early detection of health related issues and developmental delays to support early intervention. Program shares the tools with families to complete the questionnaires. Results are shared with families at conferences, and referrals are provided, as needed.  For information about developmental screening, contact your Inclusion Specialist at inclusion@decal.ga.gov. | 6 |

<div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 2.3</div>

Initial Application and Reassessment:

<div align="center">Submit no more than five of your program's best practices and established policies relating to health and safety information to families, such as the following:</div>

- o Samples of written material shared with families
- o Sample of policies from your program's Parent/Family Handbook
- o Description and evidence of developmental screening tools used to detect health related issues and developmental delays (sample tools and narrative of how they are used) and documentation regarding referrals for families in need (narrative of how used)

<div align="center">**Do not upload children's confidential health data.**</div>

## Portfolio Standard 3: Family Engagement – 18 Points Possible

Family engagement, particularly, during the critical early years, has been proven to have a profound impact on a child's success in school and life. Programs can play a key role in equipping families to best support their children's early learning experiences. For this standard, points are assigned based on the percentage of program staff that have completed Strengthening Families training, the completion of the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment, a written family engagement improvement plan, documentation of actions taken to complete the plan, and evidence that the program has met each of the requirements listed.

| 3.1 Family Partnership | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 3.1.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 3.1.1 **50%** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training. | 2 |
| 3.1.2 **75%** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training. | 4 |
| 3.1.3 **80%** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families training. | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 3.1</div><br>Initial Application:<br>    o   Strengthening Families training will be verified for all staff in the PDR. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the PDR at the time of portfolio submission.<br><br>Reassessment:<br>    o   Strengthening Families training will be verified for all staff. Points for completed training hours will be awarded based on training entered and verified in the PDR at the time of portfolio submission. | |

| 3.2 Strengthening Families Self-Assessment | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 3.2.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 3.2.1 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **one** of the **strategies**. | 2 |
| 3.2.2 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **three** of the **strategies**. | 4 |
| 3.2.3 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **four** of the **strategies**. | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 3.2</div><br>Initial Application:<br>    o   Copy of completed Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and written improvement plan addressing either 1, 3, or 4 strategies. This assessment is located in "Additional Resources" at www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov.<br><br>Reassessment:<br>    o   Program submits evidence of implementing the prior improvement plan and submits a new improvement plan | |

| 3.3 Family Engagement/Support Conferences | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 3.3.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 3.3.1 Program has policies and practices in place addressing inclusion, confidentiality of child records, and family engagement. | 2 |
| 3.3.2 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.1, **and** has policies and practices that promote healthy transitions as children transition to another room or setting **and** offers **family conferences** at least **twice** a year. | 4 |
| 3.3.3 Has completed all of criteria 3.3.2, **and** shows **evidence that** the program provides **a role to** strengthen family connections (e.g., family workshops, intergenerational activities, community partnerships, lending library, classroom websites, etc.), **and** the program establishes an opportunity for families to meet at least **twice** a year to give support and input to the program (e.g., family advisory committee/board). | 6 |
| <div align="center">What to Submit for Standard 3.3</div><br>Initial Application and Reassessment:<div align="center">Submit no more than five samples of the following:</div><ul><li>Evidence of written policy on inclusion and confidentiality of children's records</li><li>Evidence of policies and practices that demonstrate transition activities (policy, special events, site visits, guest speaker agenda, etc.)</li><li>Evidence of policies and practices that encourage family engagement (policy, volunteer opportunities in classrooms, special events, open classroom policy, targeted outreach activities to fathers and extended family, etc.)</li><li>Evidence of family conferences once or twice yearly (conference forms, policy, etc.)</li><li>Evidence of family connection activities (workshop or event description and sign-in sheet, link to website, copies of newsletters, handouts, and examples of at-home educational activities given to families)</li><li>Evidence of family resource sharing (samples of materials distributed to families, family handbook, picture of family resources area)</li><li>Evidence of twice yearly family advisory committee/board meetings (agenda, advisory board mission/vision statement)</li></ul> | |

## Portfolio Standard 4: Intentional Teaching Practices – 12 Points Possible

This standard respects the right for programs to choose the curriculum they implement. Points are earned in this area based on the program's ability to show a direct alignment between a developmentally appropriate curriculum, Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), lesson planning, and assessment. It is critical that programs show intention and responsiveness to the holistic developmental needs of children at each age level. Evidence for this standard must be descriptive and address all learning domains. Definitions of the GELDS and curriculum are in Sections 8.4 and 8.5 of the Glossary, respectively. School-Age classrooms identified in Standard 1 must upload one week of lesson plans.

| 4.1 Curriculum | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 4.1.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 4.1.1 The program uses an age appropriate curriculum that supports development across all five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge) **and** is culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate. | 2 |
| 4.1.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.1.1, **and** the program curriculum is aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). | 4 |
| What to Submit for Standard 4.1 | |

Initial Application and Reassessment:

           Description of your program's curriculum used at each age level including the following:
- o Evidence of how curriculum supports the five learning domains (physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, and cognitive development and general knowledge)
- o Evidence of how curriculum is culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate (lesson plans, photos, newsletters, incorporation of children's home language, etc.)
- o Evidence of how curriculum is aligned with the GELDS (lesson plans, narratives of how curriculum is aligned)

| 4.2 Lesson Plans and Accommodations for Every Child | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 4.2.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 4.2.1 Lesson plans are used for all age groups and include evidence of adaptations to meet children's individual needs. | 2 |
| 4.2.2 Has completed all of criteria 4.2.1, **and** the program curriculum is aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) for birth to five classrooms. | 4 |
| What to Submit for Standard 4.2 | |

Initial Application and Reassessment:
- o One week of lesson plans **per** age group that show alignment, when applicable, with the GELDS (GELDS codes used) and show accommodations to meet children's individual needs (equipment, materials, communication tools, visual supports, etc.) For GELDS lesson plan templates, visit here: http://gelds.decal.ga.gov/Resources.aspx.

| 4.3 Assessments | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| 4.3.0 Criteria not met. | 0 |
| 4.2.1 Gathers instructional assessment data on at least one age group. | 2 |
| 4.3.2 Gathers instructional assessment data on more than one age group. | 4 |
| What to Submit for Standard 4.3 <br><br> Initial Application and Reassessment: <br>     o   Submit one paragraph describing the type of instructional assessment and additional tools your program uses with each age group. | |

## Portfolio Standard 5: Teacher: Student Ratios and Group Size – 20 Points Possible

Early care and education research indicates that smaller numbers of children per adult are associated with more positive outcomes and that crowded environments associated with large group sizes may interfere with learning. This section requires a program to submit evidence for each classroom of ratios and group sizes throughout the entire day at the program. We recognize that individual programs must consider many variables when determining how to manage ratios and group sizes. This standard recognizes that a variance of both ratio and group size may be based on the time of day and staff schedules. **A program is assigned points based on which ratio level they maintain for 75% or more of the classroom hours and/or program day.** Definitions of ratios and group size are in Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of the Glossary, respectively.

| 5.1 Teacher: Student Ratios – Level Rating Scale | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom Age Groups | Level 1 Ratios | Level 2 Ratios | Level 3 Ratios |
| Infants (6 weeks to 12 months) | 1:6 | 1:5 | 1:4 |
| Toddlers (12 months to 23 months) | 1:7 | 1:6 | 1:4 |
| Two's | 1:9 | 1:8 | 1:6 |
| Three's | 1:14 | 1:13 | 1:8 |
| Four's | 1:17 | 1:15 | 1:11 |
| Five's | 1:19 | 1:16 | 1:13 |
| School Age | 1:20 | 1:18 | 1:15 |

| Teacher: Student Ratios – Points Awarded Calculation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom Age Groups | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 1 | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 2 | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 3 |
| Infants (6 weeks to 12 months) | | | |
| Toddlers (12 months to 23 months) | | | |
| Two's | | | |
| Three's | | | |
| Four's | | | |
| Five's | | | |
| School Age | | | |
| Number of Classrooms Per Type | | | |

Note: For programs serving children in mixed-age groups, ratios will be based on the ages of the youngest children in the group. In two-year-old classrooms, identify if the majority age range is 2 to 2 ½ years or 2 ½ to 3 years.

| Percentage of Classrooms Per Level | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| (Total Number of Classrooms Per Level Type ÷ Total Number of Classrooms) x 100 | | | |

| Highest Percentage Level Determines Overall Level |
|---|
| Level 1 Ratios = 8 Total Points |
| Level 2 Ratios = 14 Total Points |
| Level 3 Ratios = 20 Points |

<u>What to Submit for Standard 5</u>

Initial Application and Reassessment:

- o Teacher: Student ratio charts for one day for each classroom within 30 calendar days of portfolio submission

# 5.1 Rating Rubric for Quality Rated Portfolios Created Before September 25, 2014

**Points for Child Care Centers, Family, and Group Homes with One or More Additional Staff Member(s)**

## Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)

Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience higher quality of care

| Relevant Standards | Total Score Achieved for Each Standard | Convert Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Portfolio Score | Quality Points |
| 1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Part A & B) | | 0 – 7 | 0 |
| 2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity | | 8 – 22 | 5 |
| 3. Family Partnership | | 23 – 37 | 10 |
| 4. Intentional Teaching Practices | | 38 – 52 | 15 |
| 5. Teacher:Student Ratios | | | |
| **Portfolio Total Score** | | | |
| **Points for Structural Quality** | | | |

## Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)

Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured

| Program ERS Average Score | ERS Score Range | Points for ERS Score |
|---|---|---|
| | 0 – 2.99 | 0 |
| | 3.0 – 3.99 | 10 |
| | 4.0 – 4.99 | 20 |
| | 5.00 – 7.00 | 30 |

Circle below to indicate if any classrooms scored below a 3.00 average

Y    N

If yes, indicate how many classrooms ____

| **Points for Process Quality** |
|---|
| |

| Circle Each Verified Accreditation | Points for Each Circle |
|---|---|
| NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, COA | 2 |
| NECPA, SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International | 1 |
| **Total Bonus Points** | |

| TQRIS Components | Points Awarded | TQRIS Level |
|---|---|---|
| Points for Structural Quality | | 0 – 14 |
| Points for Process Quality | | 15 – 24 |
| Bonus Points | | 25 – 35 |
| **TOTAL POINTS** | | 36 – 45+ |
| **RATING AWARDED** | | |

DATE:    ASSESSOR/RATER:

# Points for Family Child Care Provider with No Additional Staff Members

## Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)

Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience higher quality of care

| Relevant Standards | Total Score Achieved for Each Standard | Convert Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Portfolio Score | Quality Points |
| 1. Family Provider Qualifications (Standard 1 Part A only) | | 0 – 7 | 0 |
| 2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity | | 8 – 19 | 5 |
| 3. Family Partnership | | 20 – 31 | 10 |
| 4. Intentional Teaching Practices | | 32 – 43 | 15 |
| 5. Teacher:Student Ratios | | | |
| **Portfolio Total Score** | | | |
| **Points for Structural Quality** | | | |

## Process Quality (On-Site ERS Observation)

Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be easily observed and measured

| ERS Room Score | ERS Score Range | Points for ERS Score |
|---|---|---|
| | 0 – 2.99 | 0 |
| | 3.0 – 3.99 | 10 |
| | 4.0 – 4.99 | 20 |
| | 5.00 – 7.00 | 30 |
| **Points for Process Quality** | | |

| Circle Each Verified Accreditation | Points for Each Circle | Total Bonus Points |
|---|---|---|
| NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, COA | 2 | |
| NECPA, SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International | 1 | |

| TQRIS Components | Points Awarded | TQRIS Level |
|---|---|---|
| Points for Structural Quality | | 0 – 14 |
| Points for Process Quality | | 15 – 24 |
| Bonus Points | | 25 – 35 |
| **TOTAL POINTS** | | 36 – 45+ |
| **RATING AWARDED** | | |
| **DATE:** | **ASSESSOR/RATER:** | |

**Note: To receive the highest rating, the family provider's average ERS score must exceed 5.0.**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

## Standard 1. Part A. Director/Program Administrator Education and Professional Development

**Directions: Read all descriptors, and award points based on the highest level criteria met for each section.**

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Points for Center Director or Family Provider Education Level** | | |
| **1.1** The director/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 4** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry **and** has completed a state approved 40-hour Director Course and 5 years of experience as a program director or family child care provider. | 1 | |
| **1.2** The director/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 7** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry **or** holds an associate degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree plus six semester hours in early childhood education or a related field. | 2 | |
| **1.3** The director/family provider meets the criteria for **Career Level 8** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry **or** holds a bachelor degree or higher in business, management, or a related degree plus nine semester hours in early childhood education or a related field. | 3 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**   ☐ Director information included on employee education summary form
☐ Professional Development Registry résumé page for director/family provider *(showing career level)*

**Notes:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **2. Points for Center Director or Family Provider Professional Development Plan** | | |
| **2.1** The director/family provider has a written individual professional development plan that includes administrative training in at least **one ADM Competency** area at the **Beginner or Intermediate** level. | 1 | |
| **2.2** The director/family provider has a written individual professional development plan that includes administrative training in at least **two ADM Competency** areas at the **Intermediate or Advanced** level. | 2 | |
| **2.3** The director/family provider has a written individual professional development plan that includes administrative training in at least **three ADM Competency** areas at the **Advanced** level. | 3 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**   ☐ Copy of individual professional development plan with competency code and level for director/family provider

**Notes:**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

## 3. Points for Center Director or Family Provider Annual Training

| | |
|---|---|
| **3.1** The director/family provider has documentation of completing at least **four** ** more hours of DECAL approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 1 |
| **3.2** The director/family provider has documentation of completing at least **six** ** more hours of DECAL approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 2 |
| **3.3** The director/family provider has documentation of completing at least **eight** ** more hours of DECAL approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 3 |

**Documentation Verification Check**  ☐ Professional Development Registry résumé page and training page for director/family provider (*showing current training*)

**Notes:**

| | |
|---|---|
| <mark>**Possible Points = 9**</mark> | **Total Points Awarded for Director/Family Provider Education and Professional Development** |

**Beginning December 1, 2012**, center directors must meet one of the minimum education requirements as required by licensing.
** **Licensing rule requirements are a minimum of 10 hours of approved training annually (January through December).** During the first year of Quality Rated include two hours of cultural/linguistic training and two hours of inclusion training if you do not have evidence of being trained in these two areas. (These training hours apply in Standard 4.)

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY™ RATED

## Standard 1. Part B. Teacher Education and Professional Development
(Family Child Care Providers with No Additional Staff do not complete this section)

**Directions: Read all descriptors, and award points based on the highest level criteria met for each section.**

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|
| **4. Points for Teacher Education** | | |
| **4.1 At least 50% of all lead teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 3** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry, and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 3** * or higher. | 1 | |
| **4.2 At least 50% of all lead teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 4** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry, and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 4** * or higher. | 2 | |
| **4.3 At least 75% of all lead teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 5** * or higher in Georgia's Professional Development Registry, and **50% of assistant teachers** meet the criteria for **Career Level 5** * or higher. | 3 | |
| **Documentation Verification Check**          **None Required** | | |
| **5. Points for Teacher Professional Development Plan** | | |
| **5.1 Fifty percent (50%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual written individual professional development plan that includes training in at least **two ECE Competency** areas at the **Beginner or Intermediate level** to include training in early learning and development standards. | 1 | |
| **5.2 Seventy-five percent (75%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual written individual professional development plan that includes training in at least **three ECE Competency** areas at the **Intermediate or Advanced level** to include training in early learning and development standards. | 2 | |
| **5.3 One hundred percent (100%)** of all **lead and assistant teachers** have an annual written individual professional development plan that includes training in at least **four ECE Competency** areas at the **Advanced level** to include training in early learning and development standards, cultural competency, and inclusion. | 3 | |
| **Documentation Verification Check**     ☐ Copy of individual professional development plan with competency codes and levels for each teacher<br>**Notes:** | | |
| **6. Points for Teacher Annual Training** | | |
| **6.1 Twenty-five percent (25%) of all lead and assistant** teachers have documentation of completing at least **four** ** more hours of DECAL-approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 1 | |
| **6.2 Fifty percent (50%) of all lead and assistant** teachers have documentation of completing at least **six** ** more hours of DECAL-approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 2 | |
| **6.3 Seventy-five percent (75%) of all lead and assistant** teachers have documentation of completing at least **eight** ** more hours of DECAL-approved professional development beyond what is required annually by licensing rules as documented on their PDR training history page. | 3 | |
| **Documentation Verification Check**     ☐ Professional Development Registry résumé page and training page for all teaching staff (*showing current training*)<br>**Notes:** | | |

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

**Total Points Awarded for Teacher Education and Professional Development**

Possible Points = 9

**TOTAL STANDARD 1. DIRECTOR AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:**

Possible Points = 18

Part A

+

Part B

\* Beginning December 1, 2012, 100% of lead teachers must meet one of the minimum education requirements as required by licensing.

\*\* **Current annual licensing rule requirements are a minimum of 10 hours of approved training from hire date to anniversary.** During the first year of Quality Rated include two hours of cultural/linguistic training and two hours of inclusion training if you do not have evidence of being trained in these two areas. (These training hours apply in Standard 4.)

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY RATED

## Standard 2. Child Nutrition and Physical Activity

**Directions: Read all descriptors, and award points based on the highest level criteria met for each section.**

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Points for Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan** | | |
| **1.1** Within the past year, the program has conducted the DECAL self-assessment for nutrition and physical activity practices and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **one criterion** for **each of the two domain areas.** | 1 | |
| **1.2** Within the past year, the program has conducted the DECAL self-assessment for nutrition and physical activity practices and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **two criteria** for **each of the two domain areas.** | 2 | |
| **1.3** Within the past year, the program has conducted the DECAL self-assessment for nutrition and physical activity practices and has developed a written improvement plan addressing at least **three criteria** for **each of the two domain areas.** | 3 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Completed child nutrition and physical activity assessment

☐ Written improvement plan (two domain areas, *nutrition* and *physical activity*) with documented evidence of addressing one, two, or three criteria for each domain

**Notes:**

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|
| **2. Points for CPR/First Aid** | | |
| **2.1 Seventy-five percent (75%)** of staff are current with CPR and First Aid certification. | 1 | |
| **2.2 Eighty-five percent (85%)** of staff are current with CPR and First Aid certification. | 2 | |
| **2.3 One hundred percent (100%)** of staff are current with CPR and First Aid certification. | 3 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Copies of current CPR and First Aid cards for staff or copies of *Professional Development Registry résumé* page *(showing CPR/First Aid certifications and expiration dates)*

**Notes:**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY RATED

| 3. Points for Written Health Information/Family Resources | | |
|---|---|---|
| **3.1** In the past year, the program has provided written materials to families about the importance of **immunizations**, oral **hygiene**, **vision screening**, and **hearing screenings**. | 1 | |
| **3.2** Everything at the 1 point level, _**and**_<br>Create a family resource area for materials relating to health and safety, _**and**_<br>Provide referrals for screenings for families in need, _**and**_<br>Program requires families to submit **Form 3300** (vision, dental, hearing screening) for all children ages 3 and above within 90 days of enrollment. Follow-up services are provided as needed. | | 2 |
| **3.3** Everything at the 2 point level, _**and**_<br>Screening tools (Ages and Stages Questionnaire [ASQ] and ASQ-SE) are used annually with family permission to provide early detection of health related issues and developmental delays to support early intervention. | | 3 |
| **Documentation Verification Check**<br><br>☐ Samples of written materials distributed to families detailing the importance of immunizations, oral health, vision, and hearing screenings *(brochures, newsletters, policies, family handbook, etc.)*<br>☐ Pictures of family resource area<br>☐ Documentation regarding referrals for screenings for families in need *(narrative of how used)*<br>☐ Description and evidence of screening tools utilized to detect health related issues and developmental delays *(sample tools and narrative of how they are used)*<br><br>**Notes:** | | |
| **Possible Points = 9** | Total Points Awarded for Child Nutrition and Physical Activity | |

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY™ RATED

## Standard 3. Family Partnership

Directions: Read all descriptors, and award points based on the highest level criteria met for each section.

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|

### 1. Points for Strengthening Families Online Training

| | Possible Points |
|---|---|
| 1.1 **Fifty percent (50%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families online training. | 1 |
| 1.2 **Seventy-five percent (75%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families online training. | 2 |
| 1.3 **One hundred percent (100%)** of the staff have completed the Strengthening Families online training. | 3 |

**Documentation Verification Check** ☐ Verification of online training from Strengthening Families

**Notes:**

### 2. Points for Strengthening Families Self-Assessment

| | Possible Points |
|---|---|
| 2.1 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families self-assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **one** of the **strategy areas.** | 1 |
| 2.2 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families self-assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **three** of the **strategy areas.** | 2 |
| 2.3 The program has conducted the Strengthening Families self-assessment within the past year and has developed a written improvement plan to address at least **four** of the **strategy areas.** | 3 |

**Documentation Verification Check** ☐ Copy of completed Strengthening Families self-assessment and written improvement plan addressing one, three, or four strategy areas

**Notes:**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY™ RATED

## 3. Points for Family Involvement/Support and Conferences

**3.1** Program has policies and practices in place that address inclusion, confidentiality of child records, and encouragement of family involvement, **and** director and staff have received a minimum of **two hours of training** in inclusion and **two hours of training** in cultural/linguistic competency, **and** program offers **family conferences** at least **once** a year.  | 1

**3.2** Everything at the 1 point level, **and**
**Four hours of training** in cultural/linguistic competency for staff, **and**
Program offers **family conferences** at least **twice** a year.  | 2

**3.3** Everything at the 2 point level, **and**
**Six hours of training** in cultural and linguistic competency, **and**
Program establishes an opportunity for families to meet at least **twice** a year to give support and input to the program *(family advisory committee/board, etc.)*  | 3

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Evidence of family conferences once or twice yearly *(conference forms, policy, sign-up sheet, etc.)*

☐ Evidence of twice yearly family advisory board meetings *(agenda and sign-in sheet, letter from family board, advisory board mission/vision statement)*

☐ Evidence of policies and practices that encourage family involvement *(policy, volunteer opportunities in classrooms, special events, open classroom policy, etc.)*

☐ Evidence of training hours in inclusion and cultural/linguistic competency *(PDR résumé page and training page)*

☐ Evidence of written policy on inclusion and confidentiality of children's records

**Notes:**

**Total Points Awarded For Family Partnership**

**Possible Points = 9**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY RATED

# Standard 4. Intentional Teaching Practices

**Directions: Read all descriptors, and award points based on the highest level criteria met for each section.**

| | Possible Points | Points Awarded (1, 2, or 3) |
|---|---|---|

## 1. Points for Curriculum

| | Possible Points | |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1** The program utilizes an age appropriate curriculum that supports development across five learning domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and approaches to play) **and** classrooms, materials, curriculum, and interactions reflect value for children's home languages, traditions, and culture. | 1 | |
| **1.2** Everything at the 1 point level, **_and_** Curriculum is aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards. | 2 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Description of curriculum used at each age level include (can use curriculum questionnaire as a format)

_____ Evidence of how curriculum supports five learning domains and children's culture

_____ Evidence of how curriculum is aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards _(lesson plans, narrative of how curriculum is aligned)_

_____ Classroom daily schedules

_____ Evidence of how the curriculum reflects the traditions of the children enrolled in the program _(policy handbook, newsletter, photos, incorporation of children's home language, etc.)_

**Notes:**

## 2. Points for Lesson Plans and Accommodations for Children with Individual Needs

| | Possible Points | |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1** Lesson plans are utilized for all age groups and include evidence of adaptations to accommodate children's individual needs. | 1 | |
| **2.2** Lesson plans for all age groups include evidence of adaptations to accommodate children's individual needs **and** are aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards. | 2 | |

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Two weeks of lesson plans **per** age group

☐ Lesson plans show alignment with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards

☐ Lesson plans show accommodation of individual needs and peer interaction (**_equipment, materials, communication tools, visual supports, etc._**)

**Notes:**

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY RATED

## 3. Points for Assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| **3.1** On-going formative assessments are used at least twice a year to inform teaching practices. | 1 |
| **3.2** On-going formative assessments are used at least twice a year to inform teaching practices, **_and_** Teachers and directors have a working knowledge of instructional strategies to support English and second language learners. | 2 |

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Description and evidence of assessments used to guide classroom instruction (*narrative of assessment used and samples of assessment tools, anecdotal notes, planning grids, etc.*)

☐ Evidence of training in instructional strategies to support English and second language learners

**Notes:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Possible Points = 6** | **Total Points Awarded for Intentional Teaching Practices** |

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY™
RATED

## Standard 5. Teacher to Student Ratios

| CLASSROOM NAME Or FAMILY HOME (All classrooms including GA Pre-K, Extended day Pre-K, and School-Age before/after care) | AGE RANGE OF CHILDREN (Record the age range for the majority of children in the class.) | CLASSROOM AGE GROUP CLASSIFICATION Infants - Less Than 12 months Toddlers - 12 to 23 months Two's Three's Four's Five's School Age | HIGHEST RATIO DURING THE DAY (Teacher to Student) (Teacher to Student ratio for 75% of the day) | LEVEL RATING To Be Determined by Level Rating Scale Below |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

| CLASSROOM NAME<br>(All classrooms including GA Pre-K, Extended day Pre-K, and School-Age before/after care) | AGE RANGE OF * CHILDREN<br>(Record the age range for the majority of children in the class.) | CLASSROOM AGE GROUP CLASSIFICATION<br>Infants - Less Than 12 months<br>Toddlers - 12 to 23 months<br>Two's<br>Three's<br>Four's<br>Five's<br>School Age | HIGHEST RATIO DURING THE DAY<br>(Teacher to Student ratio for 75% of the day) | LEVEL RATING<br>To Be Determined by Level Rating Scale Below |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Note:** For classrooms with mixed-age groups, base the ratios on the ages of the youngest children in the group if more than 20% of the children in the mixed-age group belong to younger age group(s).

* In two-year-old classrooms, identify if the majority age range is 2 to 2 ½ years or 2 ½ to 3 years.

## Standard 5. Teacher to Student Ratios - Level Rating Scale

| Classroom Age Grouping | Level 1 Ratios | Level 2 Ratios | Level 3 Ratios |
|---|---|---|---|
| Infants (6 weeks to 12 months) | 1:6 | 1:5 | 1:4 |
| Toddlers (12 months to 23 months) | 1:7 | 1:6 | 1:4 |
| Two's | 1:9 | 1:8 | 1:6 |
| Three's | 1:14 | 1:13 | 1:8 |
| Four's | 1:17 | 1:15 | 1:11 |
| Five's | 1:19 | 1:16 | 1:13 |
| School Age | 1:20 | 1:18 | 1:15 |

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY RATED

## Standard 5: Teacher to Student Ratios - Points Awarded Calculation

| Total Number of Classrooms for Entire Program | Classroom Age Groups | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 1 | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 2 | Number of Classrooms Per Age Group Meeting Level 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Infants (6 weeks to 12 months) | | | |
| | Toddlers (12 months to 23 months) | | | |
| | Two's | | | |
| | Three's | | | |
| | Four's | | | |
| | Five's | | | |
| | School Age | | | |
| Total Number of Classrooms Per Level Type | | | | |

| Percentage of Classrooms Per Level (Total Number of Classrooms Per Level Type ÷ Total Number of Classrooms for Entire Program) | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

### Highest Percentage Level Determines Overall Level

Level 1 Ratios = **4** Total Points

Level 2 Ratios = **7** Total Points

Level 3 Ratios = **10** Total Points

**Documentation Verification Check**

☐ Teacher: Student ratio charts for four consecutive weeks

☐ Center staffing plan

**Possible Points = 10**

**Total Points Awarded** _____

Rating Rubric for portfolios created before September 25, 2014.

QUALITY™ RATED

# 6. Environment Rating Scales

## 6.1 The Environment Rating Scales Process

Assessors use the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) to assess **process quality** in early childhood care and education programs. Process quality consists of the things that children actually experience that directly affects their development. It includes interactions that occur in the classroom between the staff and children, among the children themselves, and among the staff, families, and other adults. Process quality also consists of the interactions that the children have with the materials and activities in the environment and features such as space, schedule, and materials that support these interactions.

The Environment Rating Scales were developed under the auspices of the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The current notes for clarification, definitions, frequently asked questions about the scales and score sheets for the scales are available at http://www.ersi.info/index.html.

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ITERS-R) was developed especially to assess the quality of center-based and group day care for children up to 30 months of age. Child care learning centers and group day care homes that provide classrooms for children ages 24-36 months will be evaluated using the ITERS-R instrument if the majority of children enrolled in the class are 30 months or younger.

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R) observation instrument was developed especially to assess the quality of center-based and group day care for children 30-60 months of age.  Child care learning center and group day care home classrooms with the majority of children older than 30 months will be evaluated using the ECERS-R. Georgia's Pre-K classrooms will be observed using the ECERS-R, but will be considered separately from non-Georgia's Pre-K funded classrooms for four-year-old children. If a program is observed during the summer when Georgia's Pre-K is not in session, the Georgia's Pre-K classrooms will not be assessed and factored into the program's ERS score.

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R) was developed especially to assess the quality of family day care homes for children birth-12 years of age.

The School-Age Child Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) was developed especially to assess the quality of school-age child care programs for before and after school for children five to 12 years of age. Currently, this instrument is used for a pilot project with school-age only sites.

The ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and FCCERS-R scales include items to evaluate the classroom's Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning or Listening-Talking, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff.  The SACERS scale includes items to evaluate the Classroom's Space and Furnishings, Health and Safety, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, Staff Development, and Special Needs. The scales are suitable for evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs and have proven reliability and validity, nationally and internationally.

The ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and FCCERS-R, and SACERS instruments are used when the Assessor evaluates the classrooms at a child care learning program, family day care home, or group day care home program to determine if the program meets the scoring requirements for the Quality Rated level designations. Quality Rated follows the observation and scoring procedures outlined in the ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and FCCERS-R and SACERS instruments except as indicated below.

Note: If any classrooms score below a 3.0 on the ERS, the program will receive a "no stars" rating.

## Minimum Classroom Enrollment Required for Centers and Group Daycare Homes

ERS observations will only be conducted in classrooms with consistent and reliable enrollment. This means that classrooms having an enrollment consisting of only drop-off children, with uncertain days or hours of care, or classrooms where most of the children leave the program for the greater part of the day to attend another non-Quality Rated participating program, will not be included in the scheduled ERS observation.

Classrooms in centers and group day care homes must have a minimum enrollment of at least 5 children during the majority of the daily program to be eligible for observation.

## Georgia Scoring Exemptions

*All ERS Tools*

The Parent and Staff subscales of the Environment Rating Scales are not evaluated as part of the Quality Rated evaluation process. The standards assessed in these sections are covered in the Quality Rated portfolio.

*SACERS*

The use of the SACERS is being piloted in school-age only sites. At this time, Georgia's SACERS will not score the following items, and they will be noted as not applicable (N/A) and will not be averaged in the final score:

- o  Space to meet personal needs of staff
- o  Space to meet professional needs of staff
- o  Health policy
- o  Health practice
- o  Emergency and safety policy
- o  Attendance
- o  Departure
- o  Interactions between staff and parents

- o  Staff interactions
- o  Relationship between program staff and classroom teachers
- o  Administrative relationship between program staff and program host
- o  Use of community resources
- o  Opportunities for professional growth
- o  Staff meetings
- o  Supervision and evaluation of staff

The following items will not be scored but will be considered in the scoring for item 44 of the SACERS:

- o  Individualization
- o  Multiple opportunities for learning and practicing skills

- o  Engagement
- o  Peer interactions
- o  Promoting communication

A program's Quality Rated designation is determined by a program's average score from the observation(s), the portfolio score, and bonus points.

## 6.1 Frequently Asked Questions about the ERS

**How will I know when the observation is scheduled?**

Before an observation is scheduled, the center director completes the portfolio requirements and submits the online portfolio documentation to DECAL. Once the portfolio has been accepted, an Assessor will be assigned who will contact the program via email to obtain "black-out" dates. Programs can identify up to five (5) days when they do not want to receive an observation, excluding state holidays. You can view a list of state holidays here: http://georgia.gov/popular-topic/observing-state-holidays.

Black-out dates are days that are not typical for the program or days the regular schedule may not be followed, like school holidays/celebrations, field trips, picture day, etc.

Programs can expect the required observations to be completed within *ninety (90) calendar days* of their portfolio being accepted. The deadline date for the observation will be included in the email sent by the Assessor requesting the black-out dates.

**How long will the observation take? How many classes will be observed?**

Observations in child care centers, depending on the size of the center and the number of classrooms needing observations, may require up to five days to complete. An observation in a family day care home will be completed in one day.

The policy of Quality Rated is to observe one-third of the *total* classrooms in a program <u>and</u> to observe each age group represented in the Environment Rating Scales. To ensure that each age group is observed, one-third of the ITERS-R classrooms, one-third of the ECERS-R classrooms, and one-third of the Georgia's Pre-K classrooms will be observed (if the center has a Georgia's Pre-K classroom[s]). If additional classrooms must be observed to meet the one-third of total classrooms requirement, the additional classroom(s) will be randomly chosen from the remaining classrooms not yet chosen for observation.

In child care learning centers, the Assessor randomly chooses which of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms to observe. Each ITERS-R and ECERS-R classroom observation takes a minimum of three hours. Therefore, the Assessor may spend multiple days at the program site to observe the classes, or more than one Assessor may come to observe on the same day(s).

In group day care homes, the Assessor will determine with the program administrator which ERS tool is best suited for the program. Typically, group child care homes with less than seven children cared for in one space will be assessed using the FCCERS-R Instrument. Programs with more than seven children cared for in separate classrooms with different staff members may be assessed using the ITERS-R and ECERS-R as appropriate.

When determining the number of ECERS-R classrooms to be included for Quality Rated, the Assessor will observe a sample of Georgia's Pre-K classrooms (one-third) and non-Georgia's Pre-K funded classrooms (one-third) for four-year-old children.

- o A child care learning center that serves children birth through age five and Georgia's Pre-K, will have a minimum of three classrooms observed – at least one ITERS-R classroom, at least one ECERS-R classroom (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded), and at least one ECERS-R (Georgia's Pre-K funded) classroom.
- o A group child care home serving children birth through age five in separate classrooms, will have a minimum of two classrooms observed – at least one ITERS-R and at least one ECERS-R classroom. If the group home serves multiple ages in only one designated area/classroom, the FCCERS-R instrument will be used.
- o A family day care home will be observed using the FCCERS-R which incorporates children ages birth through twelve in the same scale.

When calculating the number of classes to observe, the Assessor calculates the number of ITERS-R classrooms separately from the number of ECERS-R classrooms (Georgia's Pre-K funded) and ECERS-R classrooms (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded). They round down whenever there is a fraction, even if the fraction is one-half or higher (.50 to .99).  For example:

- o A child care learning center has three ITERS-R classrooms and four ECERS-R (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded classrooms). A total of eight classrooms are considered eligible for observation, and all age groups must be observed; therefore, this center will have two classrooms observed. In this center, one of the ITERS-R classrooms (3 classes divided by 3 = 1 class), and one of the ECERS-R classrooms (4 classes divided by 3= 1.33 classes, rounded down to 1 class) will be observed.
- o A small child care learning center has one ITERS-R classroom and two ECERS-R classrooms (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded).  A total of three classrooms are eligible for observation, and all age groups must be observed; therefore, this center will have two classrooms observed. In this center, the ITERS-R class would be observed, and one of the ECERS-R classes will be observed.
- o A large child care learning center has five ITERS-R classrooms, seven ECERS-R (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded classrooms), and one ECERS-R (Georgia's Pre-K funded classroom). A total of thirteen classrooms are eligible for observation, and all age groups must be observed; therefore, this center will have four classrooms observed. In this center, one ITERS-R classroom (5 divided by 3 = 1.66 classes, rounded down to 1) and two ECERS-R (non-Georgia's Pre-K funded classrooms) (7 divided by 3 = 2.33 classes, rounded down to 2 ECERS-R classes), and one ECERS-R (Georgia's Pre-K funded classroom) will be observed.
- o A family day care home serves six children ranging in age from three months to nine years old. The program will be observed using the FCCERS-R scale, which incorporates children ages birth through twelve, so only one observation of the entire group of children is conducted.

### What happens on the day the Assessor arrives?

The Assessor(s) typically arrives at the program in the morning of day one and meets *briefly* with the program administrator or family day care provider to discuss the observation process.

In child care learning centers and group child care settings, the Assessor will calculate the number of classrooms to observe (one-third of each age group represented – ITERS-R, ECERS-R (non-Georgia's Pre-K

funded), and ECERS-R (Georgia's Pre-K funded), and will randomly select the first class to observe. In a family day care home, the Assessor will begin observing the combined group of multi-aged children.

- o During the three-hour observation, the Assessor will take notes of everything that is observed.
- o The Assessor does not take part in classroom activities or interfere with the on-going program activities.
- o The Assessor may station him/herself around the perimeter of the classroom, but move often, yet discretely, to obtain better vantage points to observe interactions, routines, and materials.
- o The Assessor maintains a neutral facial expression to minimize potential interactions. If a child approaches and speaks to the Assessor, the Assessor may briefly explain that s/he is "watching the children play" or "working."
- o The Assessor will arrange a time with the teacher after the three-hour observation to ask questions about indicators that s/he was not able to observe. The teacher should be free of responsibility for the children when he or she is answering questions. *About 20 minutes will be required for questions.*

Once the observation period in the first classroom is completed, the Assessor(s) will leave the center. The Assessor(s) will return to observe additional classrooms, if necessary, and will repeat the process until all the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms selected are observed. *The Assessor will not share results of the observations with the child care program at the time of the observations.* A full report of the observations will be made available to the child care program once the Quality Rated designation has been determined.

The ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and FCCERS-R observations are not a Child Care Services (CCS) licensing study or monitoring visit, Georgia's Pre-K evaluation, or Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) review. The Assessor will focus primarily on the items in the ITERS-R, ECERS-R, or FCCERS-R observation instruments. However, if serious Georgia's Pre-K, licensing, and/or Child and Adult Care Food Program violations are observed during the evaluation, the ITERS-R, ECERS-R, or FCCERS-R observation may be suspended and the violations addressed as indicated by their severity.

### What happens after the observation is completed?

Because this is a high stakes observation, the Assessor team is assigned and no technical assistance or discussion of findings is given during or after the observation. No onsite feedback is provided as the final scores are not available at that time. The final scores will be assigned through the system based on the items scored for all classrooms observed.

Points from the assessment are combined with the points from the portfolio and bonus points assigned for national accreditations earned by the program. Final review of all assessments and documentation will be completed, and the site will be notified by email of the star rating within sixty (60) calendar days of the final assessment.

# 7. Section VI - Appendices

## 7.1 Tiered Reimbursement

Tiered reimbursement is the bonus awarded to programs that have achieved a star rating and provide child care for families that participate in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. Quality Rated tiered reimbursements began on July 1, 2013.

Some frequently asked questions regarding tiered reimbursement are:

### 1. What do I have to do to qualify for tiered reimbursement?
To qualify for tiered reimbursement, you must:
- o Be in compliance with all DECAL programs and policies, including Child Care Licensing, Georgia's Pre-K, Child and Adult Care Food Care Program, and CAPS
- o Comply with any repayment agreement
- o Have earned 1, 2, or 3 stars through DECAL's Quality Rated program

### 2. My program is Quality Rated.  What is my bonus?
Tiered reimbursement is based on the number of Quality Rated stars.
- o ★ Star  = 2% quality bonus
- o ★★ Stars = 5% quality bonus
- o ★★★ Stars = 10% quality bonus

The quality bonus is based on the net CAPS reimbursement multiplied by the x%. The formula is: The state rate minus the family's CAPS assessed fee = net due to the provider; the percentage is calculated on the net amount due to the provider.

### 3. What do I have to do to receive tiered reimbursement once I am Quality Rated?
Providers who are Quality Rated will automatically receive an application for tiered reimbursement.  The tiered reimbursement application must be reviewed, signed, and returned to MAXIMUS for approval before providers can receive their bonus. Tiered reimbursement will begin with services the Monday after the application is approved.

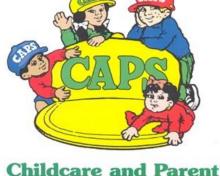### 4. Will there be any changes to my CAPS certificates?
No.  The CAPS certificates will remain the same.

### 5. How will I receive my tiered reimbursement payment?
Once the application has been approved, a confirmation email will be sent to the address provided by the program.  Payment for tiered reimbursement will happen automatically upon approval.  Tiered reimbursement will be a bonus percentage added to your net subsidy payment.

For any additional questions, contact CAPS at capstierapps@decal.ga.gov.

## 7.2 Registering in the Professional Development Registry

All administrators and teaching staff must be registered in the Georgia Professional Development Registry (PDR) for a program to participate in Quality Rated. Quality Rated points are based on the education and professional development criteria verified in the PDR at the time of your portfolio submission. For more information about the PDR, go to www.pdr.decal.ga.gov or call toll free at 1-866-258-7737.

## 7.3 Career Levels

Professional development in the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System takes into account training, education, and experience. By noting your achievements and number of years of experience in working with young children, you can mark your professional accomplishments using the following chart.

**Level I**
Professionals beginning their career in early care and education:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
♦ 0 to 3 years of early care and education experience with young children; **and**
♦ 0 to 30 clock hours of state approved/accepted training

**Level II**
Professionals who have been in the early care and education field for a few years:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
♦ 2 or more years of early care and education experience with young children; **and**
♦ 31 to 60 clock hours of state approved/accepted training

**Level III**
More experienced professionals in the early care and education field:
♦ High school diploma or GED; **and**
  ♦ 3 or more years of early care and education experience with young children; **plus**
  ♦ 61 or more clock hours of state approved/accepted training
  **or**
♦ 15 semester or 25 quarter hours in ECE coursework

**Level IV**
Professionals with a credential in the early care and education field:
♦ Unrelated Degree (Associate, Bachelor's, Masters or Doctorate in non-ECE -related field) **or**
♦ Current Child Development Associate (CDA) **or**
♦ PSC-certified Paraprofessional (FLD691)

**Level V**
Professionals beginning their formal education in the early care and education field:
♦ Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development

**Level VI**
Professionals who have earned an intermediate– level, formal, education credential in the early care and education field:
♦ Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development

**Level VII**
Professionals with a two-year degree in the early care and education field:
♦ Associate degree (AA/AS or AAS/AAT) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Montessori Diploma

**Level VIII**
Professionals with a four-year degree in the early care education field:
♦ Bachelor's Degree (BA/BS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Bachelor of Psychology or Social Work paired with an: ECE Associate, ECE TCD, Montessori diploma, TCC, CDA or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework(15 semester or 25 qtr. hours), **or**
♦ Other Non-ECE Bachelor's, combined with an ECE Associate , ECE TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours)

**Level IX**
Professionals with a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) teaching certificate in the Early Care / Early Education field

**Level X**
Professionals with an advanced ECE degree:
♦ Masters degree (MA/MS/MEd) in ECE or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Masters with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 4 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

**Level XI**
Professionals with a Specialist ECE degree :
♦ Specialist Degree (EdS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Specialist with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 5 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

**Level XII**
Professionals with Doctoral degrees:
♦ Doctoral Degree (PhD/EdD) in ECE or Child Development **or**
♦ Non-ECE Doctorate with an: ECE Associate, TCD, or containing ECE/ECE-related coursework (15 semester or 25 qtr. hours) or PSC Cert Level 6 with FLD702, 708, 808 or 870

Professional preparation and continued professional development is vital to improving the quality of early care and learning environments. The PDR is designed to capture educational attainment in early childhood education (ECE), ongoing professional learning, and experience working with young children. In the framework above, these elements are combined to determine a career level on a continuum from Level I to Level XII.

While many professionals may hold degrees that are not in ECE, the Career Levels recognize specific academic preparation in ECE. Degrees that are not in ECE may be deemed ECE related if they reflect the body of knowledge valued in the field. An ECE related degree is defined as "a degree containing a minimum of 15 semester or 25 quarter hours of ECE related coursework." For more information, see the ECE Related Coursework Listing at: [www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EceRelated.pdf](http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EceRelated.pdf).

## 7.4 Credential Approval Guidelines

### High School Diploma/GED
A photocopy of the diploma/GED or of high school transcripts will be used to verify the credential. If transcripts cannot be obtained, a letter from the registrant's high school's district office verifying graduation is acceptable. The letter must be on the school district's letterhead.  A foreign transcript verifying completion of high school is acceptable. A foreign credential evaluation is not required. If the registrant has completed college credits or has earned an associate's or higher or holds an ECE related credential resulting in a career level 4 or higher, they are not required to submit verification of the high school diploma.

Not Approved - When registrants submit documents that are not received in the approved format listed above or if they are not in English.

### Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)
A photocopy of the certificate or of the technical college transcripts reflecting the TCC statement that the technical certificate of credit was awarded will be used to verify the credential.

Not Approved - When there is no statement verifying that a TCC was awarded on the transcript. The PDR evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a TCC.

### Technical College Diploma (TCD)
A photocopy of the diploma or of the technical college transcripts reflecting the TCD statement that the diploma was awarded will be used to verify the credential.

Not Approved - When there is no statement verifying that a TCD was awarded on the transcript. The PDR evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a TCD.

### Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)
A photocopy of the certificate issued by the Council of Professional Recognition only will be used to verify the credential. The validity period of the certificate must be current and the Council's seal must be present on the photocopy for the credential to be valid.

**Not Approved** - When registrants send verification of the 120 clock hours earned to obtain the CDA in lieu of the credential; or submit an expired or illegible credential. Technical colleges in Georgia award nine different TCCs; these include a Child Development Associate I and a Child Development Associate II, but these are not CDAs; they are technical college certificates and cannot be entered as a CDA. They should be entered as a TCC and verified as described above.

### Degrees

Once an associate's degree or higher is earned, an official transcript reflecting the degree statement is required for verification. The degrees must be earned at an accredited institution. Electronic transcripts can be verified if submitted directly from the college registrar's office or an official college transcript service used by the institution for this purpose. If the degree is earned outside the U.S., or in U.S. territories/commonwealths, a course-by-course evaluation must be submitted from an approved Professional Standards Commission (PSC) or PDR foreign credential evaluation agency.

**Not Approved** - Unofficial transcripts and transcripts that do not have a degree statement. The PDR evaluator does not review transcripts for the prescribed courses to earn a degree. If the degree statement does not match the registrant's PDR entry, it will not be verified.

### Early Childhood Education Related Courses

ECE related courses are verified by using the PDR's "ECE-related" course chart located here: www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EceRelated.pdf. If the entry is not recognized as an ECE related course, a course description can be reviewed by the PDR team to determine eligibility. If further research is required, the PDR team will collaborate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's Certification Division to review the course description and make the final determination.  For ECE courses to be accepted, the courses must be completed and the credit earned and counted to fulfill the requirements of the conferred degree; official transcripts must be on file to verify the courses.

**Not Approved** - If the courses entered in the registry are not ECE-related (like many sociology courses) or performed at a letter grade level lower than a "C."

### Trainings

Verified with a photocopy of the certificate of completion. The certificate must list the approved entity or trainer that provided the training. A list of verified and approved entities/trainers is located at: www.training.decal.ga.gov/bfts/findTraining.do. The certificate should include the name of the participant, the date of the training, and the signature of the trainee and trainer if applicable; all are required for verification. Trainings provided by DECAL will have a training and trainer code on the certificate.

Georgia Department of Education state-approved Professional Learning Unit (PLU) transcripts and certificates of completion are accepted. GaDOE approved PLUs can be verified at www.doe.k12.ga.us/School-Improvement/Pages/Professional-Learning.aspx.
Certificates of completions from Georgia state agencies, local and out of state colleges/universities, and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) are accepted.

Trainings approved by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEUs) certificates of completion are accepted.

Not Approved - The following are not accepted: trainings that have expired; trainings that have not been completed within the last three years; trainings that do not have the appropriate signatures or that do not reflect state approval or the approval from the entities listed above. Trainings that do not list the clock hours awarded cannot be approved. Conferences that are approved for a maximum of 6 hours and the registrant enters more than 6 hours on their profile cannot be approved until the registrant makes the adjustment in the number of hours. Out-of-state Professional Learning Units are not accepted. Continuing Education Units (CEU) earned outside of colleges/universities that are not IACET approved are not accepted. PLU attendance rosters and unofficial CEU transcripts are not accepted. Fire Safety and First Aid/CPR trainings are not verified by the PDR team.

## 7.5 SHAPE Award

The Georgia SHAPE Award is an initiative of the Georgia Department of Public Health and DECAL. The award honors and recognizes Quality Rated early care and learning facilities that practice exceptional nutrition and physical activity efforts that go above and beyond current licensing standards. Only child care facilities that become Quality Rated are eligible to win the award. Winning the SHAPE Award can be used for marketing purposes by the child care facility as parents will be encouraged to select "Georgia SHAPE" programs.  Recognized child care programs will receive a certificate of achievement signed by the Governor, Georgia SHAPE decals which can be placed at the entrance(s) to the facility, access to the Georgia SHAPE logo, and inclusion on the Georgia SHAPE list of designated child care facilities available on the Department of Public Health and DECAL websites.

Note: All programs that receive the SHAPE Award are subject to an audit to ensure that the facility is maintaining the nutrition and physical activity practices as described in their Quality Rated portfolios.

### Criteria for SHAPE Award

The Department of Public Health and DECAL use information obtained from the Quality Rated portfolio to determine which centers qualify to receive the SHAPE Award. Facilities wishing to be considered for the award must check the appropriate box in Standard Two: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity in their portfolio. If the program receives a star and scores 85% or higher on Standard 2, then the program will qualify for the SHAPE award and will be contacted by the Department of Public Health to verify components submitted in the Quality Rated portfolio.

## 7.6 Instructions for Completing a Professional Learning Plan (PLP)

A Professional Learning Plan (PLP) is a way to record professional learning goals and the means by which administrators and teachers are going to achieve them. It is a structured way of improving competence and gaining skills. According to NAEYC (2011), professional learning is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional learning encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.

Standard 1 of the Quality Rated portfolio provides points for the completion of Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) by administrators and teaching staff. The PLP is a document that is designed to promote growth in early childhood and/or administrative competencies.

The PLP should be a **collaborative** effort between administrators and teaching staff. In its simplest form a PLP allows educators to:

- Assess their current level of professional knowledge in terms of competency areas relevant to their specific role, the children they teach, and their level of experience and training.
- Compare these with what types of professional learning might be needed for improvement in certain competency areas.
- Identify professional learning goal(s) that address any gaps between what they have and what is required.
- Plan ways of meeting their professional learning goal(s).

Quality Rated provides an Annual Professional Learning Plan as a model. Providers may use this form or may substitute other professional learning plans used by their program. If using a PLP provided by the program, please ensure that it includes the same information as the Quality Rated PLP.

**The Annual Professional Learning Plan should include the following information** *(administrators and teachers are referred to as educators):*

1. **Personal Information:** The educator completing the PLP will need to include their name, title/position, center/program name, date of hire, and the ages of the children they teach.

2. **PLP Start Date and PLP End Date:** The PLP should serve as an annual plan, so the start date and end date should cover a complete year of professional learning.

3. **Learning Goal(s):** In the learning goal(s) section of the PLP, the educator will write one or two goals they plan to focus on during the next twelve months. Typically, one or two professional learning goals are manageable. Some goals might be short-term. For example, a provider might need to complete specific health and safety trainings. Other goals might be long-term such as completing a two- or four-year degree in early childhood education. Another example of a goal might be to learn how to better support children's social and emotional development.

4. **Professional Learning Activity:** This section of the PLP captures the professional learning activities that the educator plans to complete to meet their goal(s). The form provides space for three professional learning activities. Examples of activities might include completion of online or face-to-face trainings or participation in coaching, mentoring or technical assistance. Administrators

and teaching staff will work together to identify which professional learning activities will help them meet their goal(s).

5. **Competency Area(s):**  In this section of the PLP form, educators will identify the specific Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competency most closely related to the professional learning activity.  The PLPs for administrators and family home providers should address *at least one* Administrator (ADM) Competency.  More points are awarded for plans that address both ADM and ECE competencies.  PLPs for teaching staff should include *at least one* Early Childhood Education (ECE) competency.  More points are awarded for plans that address more than one ECE competency.

6. **Training Level:**  In this section of the PLP form, the educator will identify the desired training level of the professional learning activity.  For example, a new educator will most likely need Beginner level training.  Experienced educators may need to choose Intermediate or Advanced level training. This information will be useful for administrators in planning the schedule of professional learning offerings. For example, if several experienced teachers have all identified improving how they teach science as a learning goal, the administrator may wish to arrange for them to attend an Intermediate or Advanced level training.

7. **Required for Licensing**:  If the activity is a training required for licensing (such as CPR) or if the training hours will go towards meeting the minimum training hours required by the state, indicate "Yes" on the drop down box in this section of the PLP form.  If the activity will not meet the required training hours, indicate "No" on this section of the form.

8. **Quality Rated Topic Areas:**  Throughout the Quality Rated rubric, the following training topics are recommended for maximum points:

   a.  Inclusion
   b.  Cultural Responsiveness
   c.  Supporting Dual Language Learners
   d.  Family Engagement
   e.  Implementation of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)

   If the professional learning activity addresses one of these topic areas, indicate which topic from the drop down options. If the activity does not address one of the Quality Rated topics, then select "Other" and indicate the topic addressed.

9. **Evidence of Completion:**  This section provides a place for the educator to record how the completion of this professional learning activity will be documented.  For example, a certificate of completion would be considered evidence.

# 8. Glossary

## 8.1 Cultural Competency

The term "cultural competency" refers to possessing and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to support the full potential of every child, family, and community. Culturally competent programs, organizations, and individuals acknowledge and demonstrate respect for other individual's or group's values, preferences, and life conditions in ways that enable them to achieve equitable and inclusive outcomes.

The term "cultural" refers to an individual's or group's ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and educational frame of reference as well as differences in family characteristics, language, dialect, gender, ability, values, sexual orientation, life conditions, religion, and community.

The early years are critical to holistic development. Every child learns and develops within the context of relationships and through meaningful interactions within their environments. Children, families, and communities benefit from education, services, and supports provided by professionals who reflect the diversity of the community and who participate in an integrated, multi-disciplinary system of professional development.

## 8.2 Curriculum

Curriculum is the academic content of a child's day and encompasses everything that a child learns in the classroom, including but not limited to:

- o Daily activities -- circle time, song time, active play time, story time, craft time, large group, dramatic play, etc.
- o The transitional period that exists between activities
- o Any everyday activity and routine that the children participate in and know to expect

In an ideal situation, a quality program's curriculum should be aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The curriculum, no matter what the philosophy, should promote active learning and cultural diversity while helping children meet various language, social, physical and cognitive goals. The curriculum should also provide strategies and guidance to support children with disabilities and dual language learners. 8.6 Inclusion Training

Training should provide general information on inclusion, including topics such as the definition and benefits of inclusion, legal issues surrounding inclusion of children with disabilities, and intentional practices in making adaptations to lesson plans, activities and curricula to support individual learners. Training addressing specific disabilities or behavior/classroom management would not meet this requirement.

## 8.3 The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)

The GELDS outline the key concepts and skills that young children develop from birth to age five. They form the foundation for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention within early care and education programs. They are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate and address the essential domains of school readiness. The GELDS are research-based and are aligned with the Head Start

Child Development and Early Learning Framework and the Georgia Performance Standards for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. For more information, visit www.gelds.decal.ga.gov.

## 8.4 Group Size

Group size refers to the maximum number of children in a particular group, who are together regularly and interact with each other, and with one or more specific staff members, in an assigned space. This definition was adapted from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and from Ruth A. Wilson's Group Size – A Key Indicator of Quality.

## 8.5 Instructional Assessment

Instructional assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct evaluations of a child's learning needs, progress, and knowledge. Assessments help teachers identify strengths and needs of children. This information helps teachers make adjustments to lesson plans, instructional strategies, and support.

## 8.6 Inclusion Training

Training should provide general information on inclusion, including topics such as the definition and benefits of inclusion, legal issues surrounding inclusion of children with disabilities, and intentional practices in making adaptations to lesson plans, activities and curricula to support individual learners. Training addressing specific disabilities or behavior/classroom management would not meet this requirement.

## 8.7 Ratios

Ratios refers to the number of staff at the program compared to the number of children enrolled. Low ratios ensure that there are enough staff to maintain the safety and security of the children. Appropriate ratios also help create an environment where children feel emotionally secure. When there are enough adults to supervise a given group, the staff-to-child interactions can be more meaningful. This definition was adapted from *The National After-School Association (NAA) Standards for Quality School-Age Care.*